

THE CAPITAL OF SINKIANG

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291 other's sleeve. The Qazaq woman frequently accompanied her husband, dressed in her best black quilted coat, and wearing a white cotton headdress swathed round the chin with a kind of gorget which becomingly framed the broad tanned face.

364 Our excursions round the town led us in every direction through rough and muddy streets. The weather was hot and the flies innumerable. This was a natural consequence of the season, which was that of the ripe melon, and the habit of the populace which was to buy a slice, eat the pulp, and then throw the rind away by the roadside. In some places the mounds of discarded peel reached to the eaves of the low houses, while dense swarms of flies buzzed gaily around.

[312] The wells were all flush with the ground, and we were never allowed to drink water which had been drawn from them. A wide rapid river flows outside the city, and is surmounted by an imposing rocky cliff, on which stands a pagoda. Beyond this are the trees of the Governor's park, which enclosure contains a life-sized statue of himself. The character of the masses

536 of the Chinese population is distinctly different from

636 that of the large towns within the Great Wall. These are colonials, and inevitably differ from the dwellers in the homeland, even though tenaciously adhering to its every manner and custom. On arrival, according to etiquette, a formal call was paid to the Governor's wife, by whom we were very graciously received. Governor Yang also came in, sat down with us, and talked on many subjects. He asked several questions concerning the journey we had taken, and showed great interest in the educational work which we had accomplished in Shansi. The policy of this strong auto-

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20 cratic ruler is that of complete segregation of his people from the turbulent nations which surround them. To

THROUGH JADE GATE

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20 this end he allows no newspaper to be published in his territory, and the postal, telegraph and wireless offices are under the control of his appointed censors. News from the outside world filters through but slowly, and all restaurants are posted with the announcement: 636
[577] *'No political discussions allowed.'* It is certainly to Governor Yang's credit that the roads of Turkestan are notably free from brigandage, and during the past decade of civil war in China, Turkestan has remained [648] peaceful. At the time of our visit the whole Yamen was busy with preparations for the journey to be shortly taken by the Governor's son and suite to the town of Zaisan in Russian territory, where the young man had been appointed Chinese Consul.

600 We were the first British women who had ever visited Urumchi, and our application for passports to cross the Russian frontier at Kuswun created a precedent. Three years previously some of our boxes were stolen from a Kansu inn, and our British passports were lost with them. The papers with which we now travelled were passports written in the Chinese language, and issued by the Chinese Foreign Office and British Consul in Hankow. These documents refer to us by our Chinese names only. We had early made application for permits to travel across Russia, which request had been forwarded to Moscow by the Soviet Consul in Urumchi, and on the day after our arrival word came that this permission was granted, when we immediately presented ourselves to make personal application for a visa. This was duly affixed to the Chinese passport, and all possible help and information with a view to making the journey easy was given to us by the Consular Staff.

The weeks of our stay were very happy and interesting and the time passed only too quickly ere arrangements